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ABSTRACT

A biography for elementary school students of Patrick Des Jarlait (Ojibwe), an American Indian painter, includes photographs of the artist and some of his work. A teacher's guide following the bibliography contains excerpts from the artist's published reminiscences about his childhood, learning objectives and directions for teachers, suggested activities, vocabulary list, resource list, evaluation checklist, and a map of the Red Lake Indian Reservation. (LFL)

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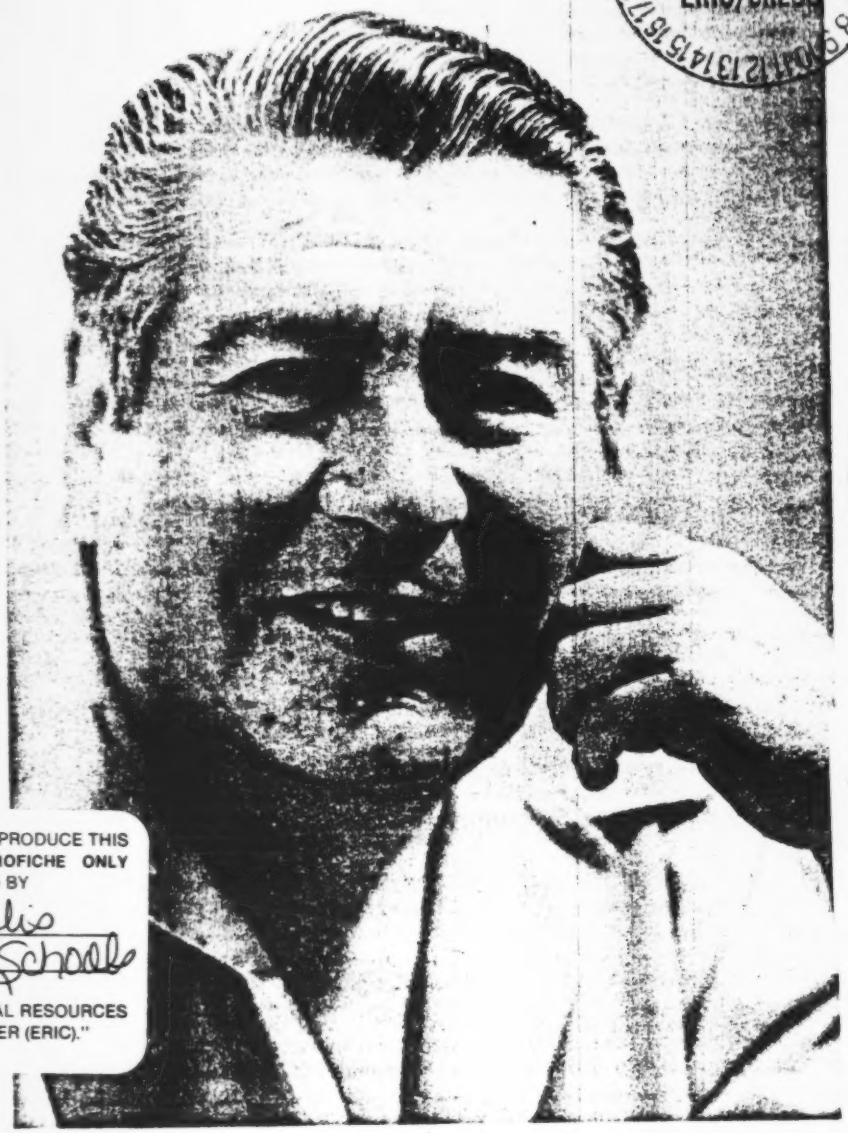

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Photograph Courtesy of: Mrs. Ramona Des Jarlait

PATRICK DES JARLAIT

OJIBWE

ARTIST

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PATRICK DES JARLAIT
OJIBWE
ARTIST

Patrick Des Jarlait (pronounced DEE-ZHAR-LAY) is well known for his many beautiful paintings about Ojibwe life. He was born on March 1, 1921 on the Red Lake Reservation in northern Minnesota. Although he died on November 5, 1972, people still learn about his paintings and admire them.

The fourth in a family of seven children, Patrick spent his earliest years living in a log house built by his father. Patrick's father worked for the Red Lake Lumber Mill and also as an independent lumberman, cutting and selling pulp wood and logs.

By the age of four, Patrick began to show enthusiasm for art, which was to become his lifelong interest. He became known as "the little boy with the pencil" and people would often ask to keep the sketches he did. Temporarily blinded at age five after contracting trachoma, Patrick surprised doctors by recovering his sight against all odds.

Throughout his life the resourceful Patrick used any opportunity to learn about art. When he was a child, the Red Lake schools did not have art classes. In the first school he attended, St. Mary's Catholic Mission School, Patrick was granted time to draw religious subjects. After transferring to Red Lake Agency Boarding School at age seven, Patrick made school decorations and carved in the woodshop. In school, Patrick was often lonely for his family. All of the pupils were required to live at the mission and boarding schools, even though some of the students could have easily walked between home and school every day.

Another boarding school experience for Patrick occurred when he was transferred to Pipestone Boarding School in Pipestone, Minnesota. His Indian classmates were members of different tribes near the school. Patrick earned money by carving tourist items out of the soft pipestone. He was also actively involved in Boy Scouts during these years, earning badges in woodcarving and art.

After attending school in Pipestone, Patrick returned to Red Lake and attended Red Lake Senior High School. He played the saxophone in a dance band with friends, while also participating in a band and choir at the high school. An English teacher, Miss Ross, gave Patrick encouragement and helped him buy the art books and supplies with which to practice. Upon graduation, Patrick received a one-year scholarship to study art at Arizona State College in Phoenix.

Blueberry Harvest

Chippewa Dancer

Day's Catch

Paintings by Patrick Des Jarlait

Photographs Courtesy of: Mrs. Ramona Des Jarlait

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During his first year at Arizona State College, World War II began. He was temporarily deferred from active service in order to work as art supervisor in a Japanese-American relocation camp in Poston, Arizona.

In 1942, after five months of work in Poston, Patrick was inducted into the Navy. Stationed at the San Diego base, he was assigned to the visual aids department. Working with artists from major movie studios, Patrick attained skills in film animation that he later used in his career as a commercial artist. During the three and a half years he was in the Navy, Patrick also prepared for his first one-man art show. Shortly before his discharge in 1945 he exhibited a collection of Red Lake paintings at the San Diego Fine Arts Gallery and sold each one.

By the late 1940's Patrick had started working as a commercial artist in the Twin Cities. He worked for Reid Ray Films, Inc., Northern Ordnance, and Campbell-Mithun, Inc. The latter is one of the top advertising firms in the country. One of Patrick's assignments at Campbell-Mithun was to help create a new television advertisement for the Theodore Hamms Brewery. After exploring different ideas, he sketched animations of a playful woodland bear. His supervisors and the Hamms Brewery liked the ideas, and the Hamms bear was created. Patrick described its creation as one of his most delightful accomplishments in commercial art.[1]

Patrick Des Jarlait's paintings are detailed, brightly colored, and contain a rounded, circular motion. His later murals and paintings depict different aspects of Ojibwe culture, such as wild ricing, maple sugar camps, berry picking, fishing, and other seasonal activities.

Prior to his death, Patrick's full-time work was devoted to free-lance painting and speaking. He liked to speak to students and others about his art, life experience, and cultural heritage. Said Des Jarlait, "...The more I painted, the more I realized that there was so much to tell about the Chippewa that needed telling soon...There were so many things that people didn't know about our wonderful way of life. I knew then what I wanted to do; somehow I was going to paint the story of my people..."[2]

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[1]Patrick Des Jarlait, Patrick Des Jarlait: The Story of an American Indian Artist, as told to Neva Williams (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Lerner Publications, 1975), p. 50.

[2]Virginia L. Dustin, "He Paints the Story of His People," St. Paul Pioneer Press & Dispatch Magazine, March 26, 1972, pp. 4-5.

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TEACHER'S GUIDE

NATIVE AMERICANS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY
PATRICK DES JARLAIT
OJIBWE
ARTIST

I. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The staff of the Indian Elementary Curriculum Project wishes to thank the following individuals and institutions for helping to make this biographical study unit possible:

Patrick Des Jarlait, Jr., for the illustrations in the biographical folder;

Ramona Des Jarlait, for the information about Patrick Des Jarlait's life and for the photographs she provided;

Lerner Publications Company for the use of excerpts from Patrick Des Jarlait: The Story of an American Indian Artist, as told to Neva Williams.

II. CURRICULUM UNIT

Native Americans of the Twentieth Century -- Patrick Des Jarlait

III. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

See the Patrick Des Jarlait biographical folder.

Excerpts from Patrick Des Jarlait: The Story of an American Indian Artist, as told to Neva Williams, published in 1975, reprinted by permission of Lerner Publications Company:

> When I was growing up, each season of the year meant the beginning of a new round of activities for the people at Red Lake. Winter was the time of year for hunting and trapping. . . . and I remember having my own trap line when I was very young. . . . The rabbits that I snared were hung in a little shed near our cabin. This shed was our frozen food locker, where we kept our wild game until Mother needed it for a meal. . . . (p. 14).

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In addition to hunting rabbits, deer, and other wild game, the Indians also did some winter fishing. . . . The fishermen had to chop holes in the thick ice in order to fish. . . . Since the fish were frozen immediately after being caught, we had the finest in fresh-frozen fish (p. 15).

. . . . . .

When signs of warmer weather appeared, the families of the reservation collected all of their equipment for harvesting maple sap. Then they set up camps and built temporary birch bark shelters near the maple groves. . . . (p. 17).

The first step in harvesting the maple sap was to tap the maple trees. This was done with a carved wooden peg that had a little groove down the center and one sharp, pointed end. The men tapped these pegs gently into the maple trees . . . From every peg they hung a birch bark basket or an old syrup can. The sap flowed along the grooved pegs and down into the containers. . . . (p. 18).

At the camps, the sap was poured into large black iron kettles that hung over a fire. Then the sap was cooked until most of the water boiled out, leaving a thick syrup. It took 30 to 40 gallons of the sweet, watery sap to make one gallon of maple syrup. . . . (p. 18).

. . . After many hours of smelling the sweet aroma of cooking sap, the children could hardly wait to eat the sugar and the candy. For a special treat, we poured hot syrup on the snow and let it harden. Then we could pull it back and forth like taffy until we had a soft, chewy candy. (pp. 18-19).

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Selling maple sugar, however, was not a major means of livelihood at Red Lake. More important was the commercial fishing industry. . . . (p. 19).

When the ice began to . . . melt in the big lakes, the Indians would begin to get their fishing nets ready. In the evenings, the men rowed their boats to the fishing grounds, often three or four miles out in the lake. . . . (p. 19).

The men would board their hand-built boats, two men to a boat, and row out to the fishing grounds. There they found the nets and pulled up their catches of pike. There were very few other kinds of fish in the nets, because the Indian fishermen knew fish habits. They knew that each kind of fish has its own grounds and water depths, and they put their nets in just the right places to catch walleye pike. . . . (pp. 19-20).

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Not all of the fish at Red Lake were caught by professional fishermen. As a boy, I loved to go fishing with my friends. . . . Our fishing season began in the springtime and lasted all through the summer. (p. 20).

. . . . . .

As summer ended, the people began to prepare for the rice harvest, the most important event of the fall season. . . . (p. 29).

The wild rice was usually ready for harvest in early September. The harvest was a family affair--adult men and women gathered and processed the rice, and the children were responsible for chores such as collecting fire wood. . . . (p. 29).

. . . . . .

Hand-built boats with boxes in the middle were used for the harvest. A man standing in the front of the boat would move it through the field with a long pole. Usually a woman sitting in the back of the boat would gather the rice. She used two tapered flails, which were cedar sticks about 18 inches long. With one flail she would bend the rice stalks over the boat. With another flail, she tapped the ripened rice gently so that it fell into the boxed area of the boat. . . . (p. 30).

After all the rice had been harvested, it was put in large metal kettles and hung over a fire for parching. . . . , the rice was heated until the tough hulls that covered it burst open. . . . After parching, the rice was poured into a hole in the ground that was lined with buckskin. . . . Then, a man called the "trampler" danced in the rice in order to separate the hulls from the kernels. . . . According to an old Indian superstition, the rice harvest would be poor the following year if the trampler did not have clean moccasins. (pp. 30-31).

When the trampler had finished his work, the rice was turned over to the women. They put a portion of the rice into a large, flat birch basket. Then they picked the basket up and poured the rice into another similar basket. As the rice was poured, the wind blew the hulls away from the kernels. After this "winnowing" process was repeated 30 or 40 times, the rice was clean and ready for use or storage. . . . (p. 31).

After the usual two-week harvest was completed, the Red Lake families returned to their homes. Soon the rice fields and lakes would be frozen over, and the yearly cycle of activities would begin again. (p. 31).

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IV. STUDENT ACTIVITIES

See Section VII, Directions and Procedures for Teachers.

V. OBJECTIVES

A. Given the background information:

1. The students will correctly identify Patrick Des Jarlait as an Ojibwe artist.

2. The students will correctly name the Red Lake Reservation in Minnesota as the birthplace of Patrick Des Jarlait.

3. The students will be able to identify three of Patrick Des Jarlait's paintings by title or by subject.

4. The students will be able to identify Patrick Des Jarlait's main goal as that of painting the story of his people.

B. The students will accurately locate the Red Lake Reservation on a map of Minnesota.

VI. MATERIALS NEEDED

Biographical folder of Patrick Des Jarlait.

VII. DIRECTIONS AND PROCEDURES FOR TEACHERS

A. Tell the students about the life of Patrick Des Jarlait and discuss the information provided in the biographical folder, emphasizing the following points: birthplace, school life, hardships, military experiences, and his experiences as an artist.

B. Have the students locate the Red Lake Reservation on a map of Minnesota.

C. Have the students identify the cultural activities depicted in examples of Patrick Des Jarlait's artwork, from those provided in the biographical folder.

D. Have the students describe Patrick Des Jarlait's artistic style from the examples provided in the biographical folder; for example, the rounded circular appearance and angular features of the figures in the paintings.

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E. Read and discuss the excerpts from Patrick Des Jarlait: The Story of an American Indian Artist; then have the students draw a picture of one of the images described.

F. Have each student draw a picture depicting an aspect of their life experience.

VIII. CONCEPTS AND VOCABULARY

A. Artist - a person who interprets the way he/she sees the world by drawing, painting, sculpting, singing, writing, acting, or through other art forms. An artist usually has innate talent and/or special training.

B. Boarding School - a school where students live, frequently for an extended period of time.

C. Ojibwe (Ō jib´wā) - a North American tribe of Indian people, also known as Chippewa and *Anishinabe* (Ah nish´ĭ nah´ bā).

D. Pipestone - soft, reddish stone traditionally used by many North American Indian tribes in making ceremonial pipes. The red stone is obtained from the famed quarries near Pipestone, Minnesota. The stone is also called catlinite in honor of the American artist, George Catlin, who visited the site in 1836.

E. Pipestone Boarding School - the name of a boarding school in Pipestone, Minnesota attended by Indian students from many different tribes in the United States. This school closed in 1947.

F. Red Lake Reservation - an Ojibwe reservation in northern Minnesota which is also the birthplace of Patrick Des Jarlait (see map on page 8).

G. Style - a distinctive or individual manner of expression.

H. Trachoma - an eye disease that often causes blindness.

IX. ACTIVITY VARIATIONS

A. Read the book, Patrick Des Jarlait: The Story of an American Indian Artist.

B. Compare and contrast Patrick Des Jarlait's paintings with another artist's work.

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X. RESOURCES

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Ojibwe Curriculum Committee, the American Indian Studies Department, University of Minnesota, and the Educational Services Division, Minnesota Historical Society. The Ojibwe - A History Resource Unit. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1973.

Roufs, Timothy G. The Anishinabe of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe. Phoenix: Indian Tribal Series, the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, 1975.

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XI. EVALUATION

A. Did the students identify Patrick Des Jarlait as an Ojibwe artist?

B. Did the students name the Red Lake Reservation in Minnesota as the birthplace of Patrick Des Jarlait?

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E. Did the students locate the Red Lake Reservation on a map of Minnesota?

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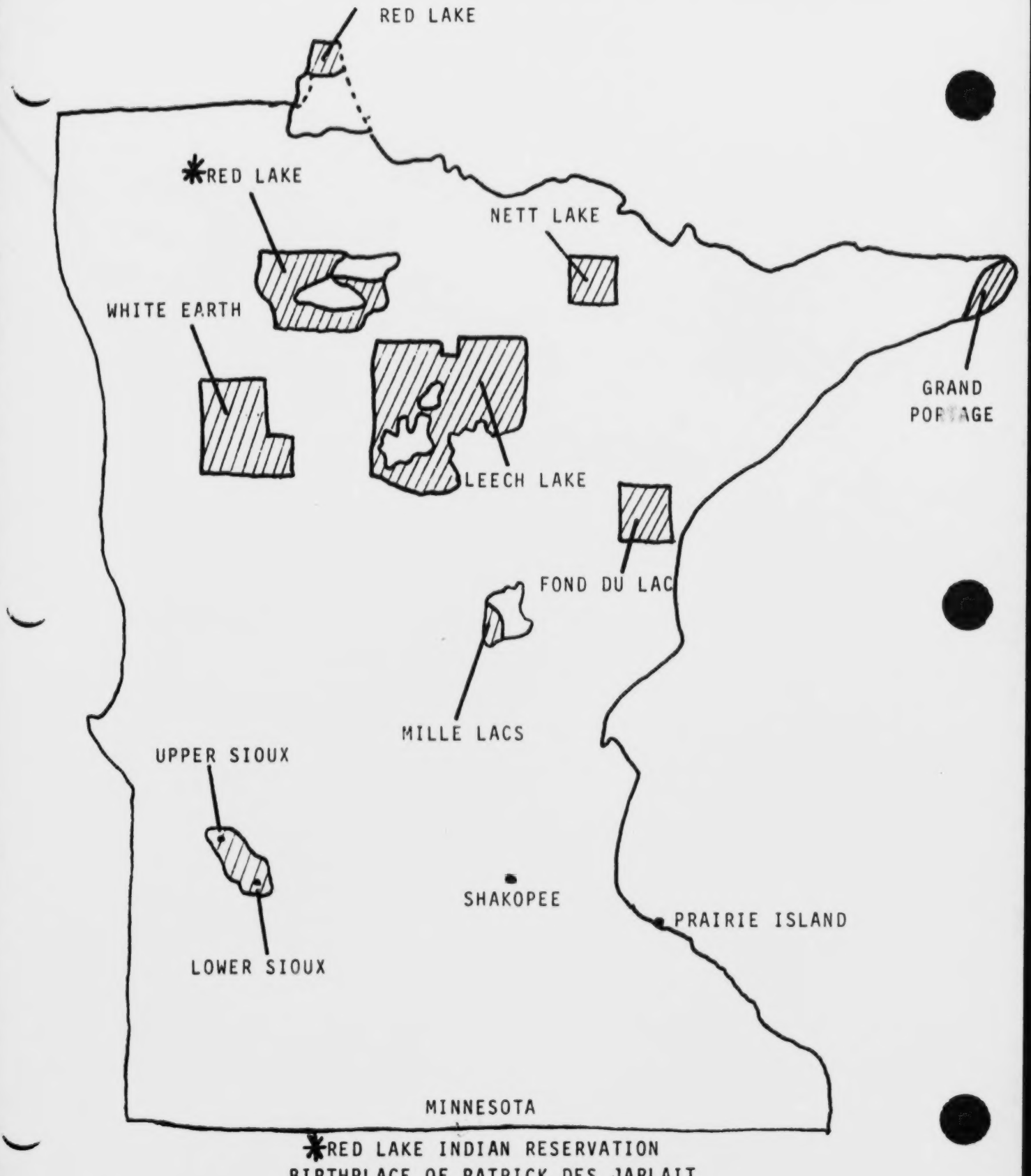

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TEACHER'S GUIDE

NATIVE AMERICANS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY
PATRICK DES JARLAIT
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ARTIST

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E. Pipestone Boarding School - the name of a boarding school in Pipestone, Minnesota attended by Indian students from many different tribes in the United States. This school closed in 1947.

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G. Style - a distinctive or individual manner of expression.

H. Trachoma - an eye disease that often causes blindness.

IX. ACTIVITY VARIATIONS

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B. Compare and contrast Patrick Des Jarlait's paintings with another artist's work.

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XI. EVALUATION

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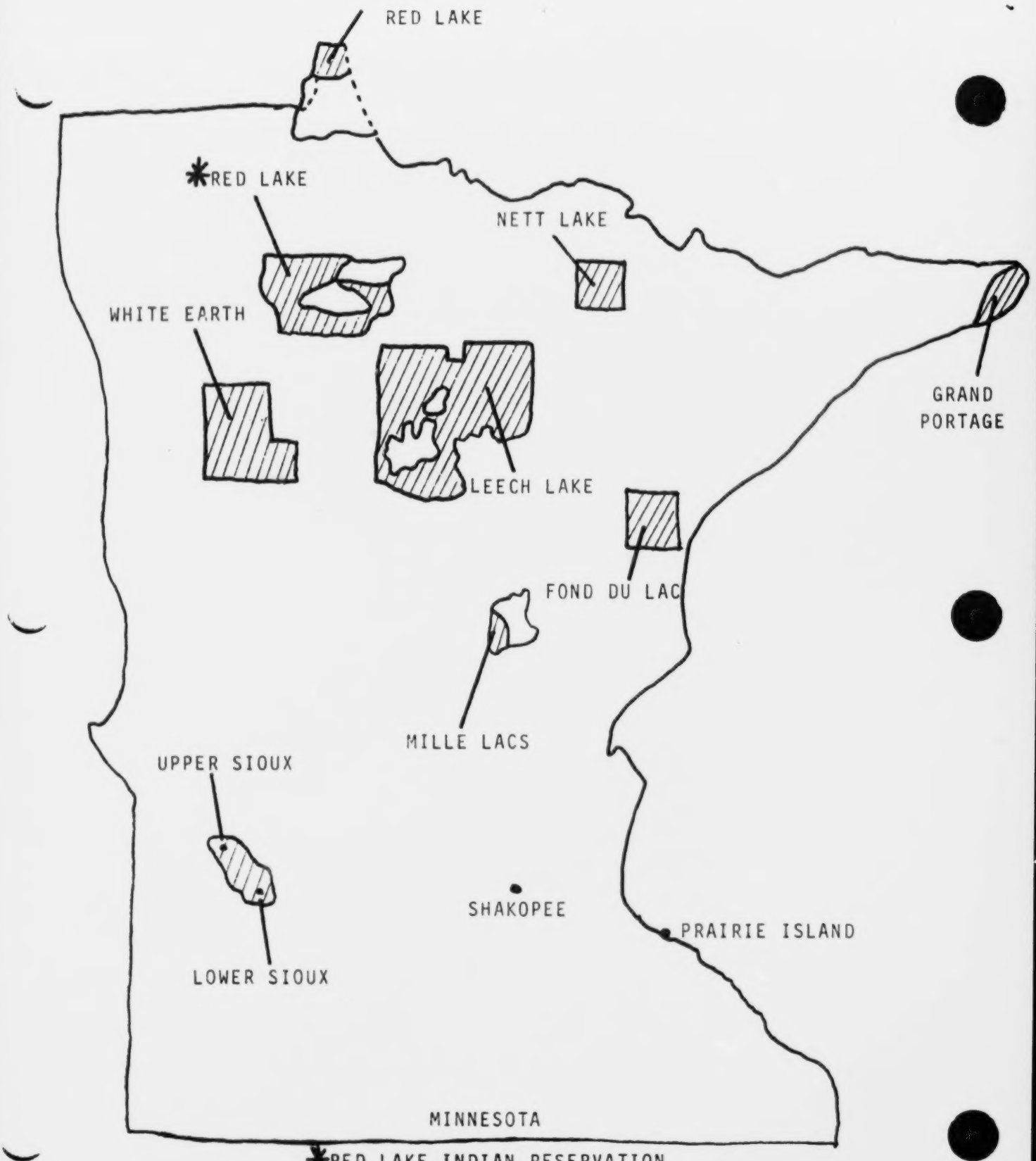

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